# **Glossary**

## Α

- acre-foot (af) The volume of water necessary to cover one acre to a depth of one foot; equal to 43,560 cubic feet or 325,851 gallons.
- adjudication A case that has been heard and decided by a judge. In the context of an adjudicated groundwater basin, landowners or other parties have turned to the courts to settle disputes over how much groundwater can be extracted by each party to the decision.
- **alluvial** Of or pertaining to or composed of alluvium.
- alluvium A general term for clay, silt, sand, gravel, or similar unconsolidated detrital material, deposited during comparatively recent geologic time by a stream or other body of running water, as a sorted or semi sorted sediment in the bed of the stream or on it's floodplain or delta, as a cone or fan at the base of a mountain slope.
- anthropogenic Of human origin or resulting from human activity.
- **appropriative right** The right to use water that is diverted or extracted by a nonriparian or nonoverlying party for nonriparian or nonoverlying uses. In California, surface water appropriative rights are subject to a statutory permitting process while groundwater appropriation is not.
- aquitard A confining bed and/or formation composed of rock or sediment that retards but does not prevent the flow of water to or from an adjacent aquifer. It does not readily yield water to wells or springs, but stores ground water.
- aquifer A body of rock or sediment that is sufficiently porous and permeable to store, transmit, and yield significant or economic quantities of groundwater to wells and springs.
- aridity A term describing a climate or region in which precipitation is so deficient in quantity or occurs so infrequently that intensive agricultural production is not possible without irrigation.
- artesian aquifer A body of rock or sediment containing groundwater that is under greater than hydrostatic pressure; that is, a confined aquifer. When an artesian aquifer is penetrated by a well, the water level will rise above the top of the aquifer.
- artesian pressure Hydrostatic pressure of artesian water, often expressed in terms of pounds per square inch; or the height, in feet above the land surface, of a column of water that would be supported by the pressure.
- **artificial recharge** The addition of water to a groundwater reservoir by human activity, such as putting surface water into dug or constructed spreading basins or injecting water through wells.
- available groundwater storage capacity The volume of a groundwater basin that is unsaturated and capable of storing groundwater.
- average annual runoff The average value of total annual runoff volume calculated for a selected period of record, at a specified location, such as a dam or stream gage.
- average year water demand Demand for water under average hydrologic conditions for a defined level of development.

# В

basin management objectives (BMOs) See management objectives

- **beneficial use** One of many ways that water can be used either directly by people or for their overall benefit. The State Water Resources Control Board recognizes 23 types of beneficial use with water quality criteria for those uses established by the Regional Water Quality Control Boards.
- **borehole geophysics** The general field of geophysics developed around the lowering of a variety of probes into a boring or well. Borehole logging provides additional information concerning physical, electrical, acoustic, nuclear and chemical aspects of the soils and rock encountered during drilling.

## C

- **community water system** A public water system that serves at least 15 service connections used by yearlong residents or regularly serves at least 25 year-long residents (DHS 2000).
- **confined aquifer** An aquifer that is bounded above and below by formations of distinctly lower permeability than that of the aquifer itself. An aquifer containing confined ground water. See artesian aquifer.
- **conjunctive use** The coordinated and planned management of both surface and groundwater resources in order to maximize the efficient use of the resource; that is, the planned and managed operation of a groundwater basin and a surface water storage system combined through a coordinated conveyance infrastructure. Water is stored in the groundwater basin for later and planned use by intentionally recharging the basin during years of above-average surface water supply.
- **contaminant** Any substance or property preventing the use or reducing the usability of the water for ordinary purposes such as drinking, preparing food, bathing washing, recreation, and cooling. Any solute or cause of change in physical properties that renders water unfit for a given use. (Generally considered synonymous with pollutant).
- **critical conditions of overdraft** A groundwater basin in which continuation of present practices would probably result in significant adverse overdraft-related environmental, social, or economic impacts. The definition was created after an extensive public input process during the development of the Bulletin 118-80 report.

#### D

- **deep percolation** Percolation of water through the ground and beyond the lower limit of the root zone of plants into groundwater.
- **desalination** A process that converts seawater or brackish water to fresh water or an otherwise more usable condition through removal of dissolved solids.
- **domestic well** A water well used to supply water for the domestic needs of an individual residence or systems of four or fewer service connections.
- drinking water system See public water system
- **drought condition** Hydrologic conditions during a defined period when rainfall and runoff are much less than average.
- **drought year supply** The average annual supply of a water development system during a defined drought period.

## F

- **electrical conductivity (EC)** The measure of the ability of water to conduct an electrical current, the magnitude of which depends on the dissolved mineral content of the water.
- effective porosity The volume of voids or open spaces in alluvium and rocks that is interconnected and can transmit fluids.
- environmental water Water serving environmental purposes, including instream fishery flow needs, wild and scenic river flows, water needs of fresh-water wetlands, and Bay-Delta requirements.
- evapotranspiration (ET) The quantity of water transpired (given off), retained in plant tissues, and evaporated from plant tissues and surrounding soil surfaces.

## G

- groundwater basin An alluvial aquifer or a stacked series of alluvial aquifers with reasonably well-defined boundaries in a lateral direction and having a definable bottom.
- groundwater budget A numerical accounting, the groundwater equation, of the recharge, discharge and changes in storage of an aquifer, part of an aquifer, or a system of aquifers.
- groundwater in storage The quantity of water in the zone of saturation.
- groundwater management The planned and coordinated management of a groundwater basin or portion of a groundwater basin with a goal of long-term sustainability of the resource.
- groundwater management plan A comprehensive written document developed for the purpose of groundwater management and adopted by an agency having appropriate legal or statutory authority.
- **groundwater mining** The process, deliberate or inadvertent, of extracting groundwater from a source at a rate in excess of the replenishment rate such that the groundwater level declines persistently, threatening exhaustion of the supply or at least a decline of pumping levels to uneconomic depths.
- groundwater monitoring network A series of monitoring wells at appropriate locations and depths to effectively cover the area of interest. Scale and density of monitoring wells is dependent on the size and complexity of the area of interest, and the objective of monitoring.
- groundwater overdraft The condition of a groundwater basin in which the amount of water withdrawn by pumping exceeds the amount of water that recharges the basin over a period of years during which water supply conditions approximate average conditions.
- groundwater quality See water quality
- groundwater recharge facility A structure that serves to conduct surface water into the ground for the purpose of replenishing groundwater. The facility may consist of dug or constructed spreading basins, pits, ditches, furrows, streambed modifications, or injection wells.
- groundwater recharge The natural or intentional infiltration of surface water into the zone of saturation.
- groundwater source area An area where groundwater may be found in economically retrievable quantities outside of normally defined groundwater basins, generally referring to areas of fractured bedrock in foothill and mountainous terrain where groundwater development is based on successful well penetration through interconnecting fracture systems. Well yields are generally lower in fractured bedrock than wells within groundwater basins.

**groundwater storage capacity** volume of void space that can be occupied by water in a given volume of a formation, aquifer, or groundwater basin.

**groundwater subbasin** A subdivision of a groundwater basin created by dividing the basin using geologic and hydrologic conditions or institutional boundaries.

**groundwater table** The upper surface of the zone of saturation in an unconfined aquifer.

**groundwater** Water that occurs beneath the land surface and fills the pore spaces of the alluvium, soil, or rock formation in which it is situated. It excludes soil moisture, which refers to water held by capillary action in the upper unsaturated zones of soil or rock.

## Н

**hazardous waste** Waste that poses a present or potential danger to human beings or other organisms because it is toxic, flammable, radioactive, explosive or has some other property that produces substantial risk to life.

**hydraulic barrier** A barrier created by injecting fresh water to control seawater intrusion in an aquifer, or created by water injection to control migration of contaminants in an aquifer.

**hydraulic conductivity** A measure of the capacity for a rock or soil to transmit water; generally has the units of feet/day or cm/sec.

**hydrograph** A graph that shows some property of groundwater or surface water as a function of time.

**hydrologic cycle** The circulation of water from the ocean through the atmosphere to the land and ultimately back to the ocean.

**hydrologic region** A study area consisting of multiple planning subareas. California is divided into 10 hydrologic regions.

**hydrostratigraphy** A geologic framework consisting of a body of rock having considerable lateral extent and composing a reasonably distinct hydrologic system.

**hyporheic zone** The region of saturated sediments beneath and beside the active channel and that contain some proportion of surface water that was part of the flow in the surface channel and went back underground and can mix with groundwater.

#### ı

**infiltration** The flow of water downward from the land surface into and through the upper soil layers.

**infiltration capacity** The maximum rate at which infiltration can occur under specific conditions of soil moisture.

**in-lieu recharge** The practice of providing surplus surface water to historic groundwater users, thereby leaving groundwater in storage for later use.

**ISI** Integrated Storage Investigations Program, an element of the CALFED Bay Delta initiative.

#### J

**joint powers agreement (JPA)** An agreement entered into by two or more public agencies that allows them to jointly exercise any power common to the contracting parties. The JPA is defined in Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 6500) of Division 7 of Title 1 of the California Government Code.

#### L

land subsidence The lowering of the natural land surface due to groundwater (or oil and gas) extraction.

- **leaky confining layer** A low-permeability layer that can transmit water at sufficient rates to furnish some recharge from an adjacent aquifer to a well.
- lithologic log A record of the lithology of the soils, sediments and/or rock encountered in a borehole from the surface to the bottom.
- **lithology** The description of rocks, especially in hand specimen and in outcrop, on the basis of such characteristics as color, mineralogic composition, and grain size.

**losing stream** A stream or reach of a stream that is losing water by seepage into the ground.

## M

- management objectives Objectives that set forth the priorities and measurable criteria of local groundwater basin management. For example, one management objective could be to minimize degradation of groundwater quality with a criteria set that groundwater will not be degraded by more than 100 mg/l in terms of TDS.
- maximum contaminant level (MCL) The highest drinking water contaminant concentration allowed under federal and State Safe Drinking Water Act regulations.

## N

- **natural recharge** Natural replenishment of an aquifer generally from snowmelt and runoff; through seepage from the surface.
- nonpoint source Pollution discharged over a wide land area, not from one specific location. These are forms of diffuse pollution caused by sediment, nutrients, etc., carried to lakes and streams by surface runoff.

#### $\mathbf{O}$

- **operational yield** An optimal amount of groundwater that should be withdrawn from an aquifer system or a groundwater basin each year. It is a dynamic quantity that must be determined from a set of alternative groundwater management decisions subject to goals, objectives, and constraints of the management plan.
- **ordinance** A law set forth by a governmental authority.
- overdraft See groundwater overdraft
- overlying right Property owners above a common aquifer possess a mutual right to the reasonable and beneficial use of a groundwater resource on land overlying the aquifer from which the water is taken. Overlying rights are correlative (related to each other) and overlying users of a common water source must share the resource on a pro rata basis in times of shortage. A proper overlying use takes precedence over all non-overlying uses.

#### P

- perched groundwater Groundwater supported by a zone of material of low permeability located above an underlying main body of groundwater.
- perennial yield The maximum quantity of water that can be annually withdrawn from a groundwater basin over a long period of time (during which water supply conditions approximate average conditions) without developing an overdraft condition.
- perforated interval The depth interval where slotted casing or screen is placed in a well to allow entry of water from the aquifer formation.

- **permeability** The capability of soil or other geologic formations to transmit water. See hydraulic conductivity.
- **pesticide** Any of a class of chemicals used for killing insects, weeds or other undesirable entities. Most commonly associated with agricultural activities, but has significant domestic use in California.
- **point source** A specific site from which wastewater or polluted water is discharged into a water body.
- **pollution (of water)** The alteration of the physical, chemical, or biological properties of water by the introduction of any substance into water that adversely affects any beneficial use of water.
- **porosity** The ratio of the voids or open spaces in alluvium and rocks to the total volume of the alluvium or rock mass.
- **possible contaminating activity (PCA)** Human activities that are actual or potential origins of contamination for a drinking water source. PCAs include sources of both microbiological and chemical contaminants that could have an adverse effect upon human health (DHS 2000).
- potentiometric surface The surface to which the water in a confined aquifer will rise in a tightly cased well.
- **prescriptive right** rights obtained through the open and notorious adverse use of another's water rights. By definition, adverse use is not use of a surplus, but the use of non-surplus water to the direct detriment of the original rights holder.
- **primary porosity** Voids or open spaces that were present when alluvium and rocks were originally deposited or formed.
- public supply well A well used as a part of a public water system.
- **public water system** A system for the provision of water for human consumption through pipes or other constructed conveyances that has 15 or more service connections or regularly serves at least 25 individuals daily at least 60 days out of the year. (DHS 2000).
- **pueblo right** A water right possessed by a municipality which, as a successor of a Spanish or Mexican pueblo, entitled to the beneficial use of all needed, naturally-occurring surface and groundwater of the original pueblo watershed Pueblo rights are paramount to all other claims.

#### R

- **recharge** Water added to an aquifer or the process of adding water to an aquifer. Ground water recharge occurs either naturally as the net gain from precipitation, or artificially as the result of human influence. See artificial recharge.
- **recharge basin** A surface facility constructed to infiltrate surface water into a groundwater basin.
- **riparian right** A right to use surface water, such right derived from the fact that the land in question abuts upon the banks of streams.
- runoff The volume of surface flow from an area.

## S

- **safe yield** The maximum quantity of water that can be continuously withdrawn from a groundwater basin without adverse effect.
- **salinity** Generally, the concentration of mineral salts dissolved in water. Salinity may be expressed in terms of a concentration or as electrical conductivity. When describing salinity influenced by seawater, salinity often refers to the concentration of chlorides in the water. See also total dissolved solids.

- saline intrusion The movement of salt water into a body of fresh water. It can occur in either surface water or groundwater bodies.
- saturated zone The zone in which all interconnected openings are filled with water, usually underlying the unsaturated zone.
- **seawater intrusion barrier** A system designed to retard, cease or repel the advancement of seawater intrusion into potable groundwater supplies along coastal portions of California. The system may be a series of specifically placed injection wells where water is injected to form a hydraulic barrier.
- secondary porosity Voids in a rock formed after the rock has been deposited; not formed with the genesis of the rock, but later due to other processes. Fractures in granite and caverns in limestone are examples of secondary openings.
- seepage The gradual movement of water into, through or from a porous medium. Also the loss of water by infiltration into the soil from a canal, ditches, laterals, watercourse, reservoir, storage facilities, or other body of water, or from a field.
- semi-confined aquifer A semi-confined aquifer or leaky confined aquifer is an aquifer that has aquitards either above or below that allow water to leak into or out of the aquifer depending on the direction of the hydraulic gradient.

**service area** The geographic area served by a water agency.

**specific conductance** See electrical conductivity

**specific retention** The ratio of the volume of water a rock or sediment will retain against the pull of gravity to the total volume of the rock or sediment.

specific yield the ratio of the volume of water a rock or soil will yield by gravity drainage to the total volume of the rock or soil.

**spring** a location where groundwater flows naturally to the land surface or a surface water body.

- stakeholders Any individual or organization that has an interest in water management activities. In the broadest sense, everyone is a stakeholder, because water sustains life. Water resources stakeholders are typically those involved in protecting, supplying, or using water for any purpose, including environmental uses, who have a vested interest in a water-related decision.
- stratigraphy The science of rocks. It is concerned with the original succession and age relations of rock strata and their form, distribution, lithologic composition, fossil content, geophysical and geochemical properties—all characters and attributes of rocks as strata—and their interpretation in terms of environment and mode of origin and geologic history.

subsidence See land subsidence

subterranean stream Subterranean streams "flowing through known and definite channels" are regulated by California's surface water rights system.

**surface supply** Water supply obtained from streams, lakes, and reservoirs.

sustainability Of, relating to, or being a method of using a resource so that the resource is not depleted or permanently damaged.

Т

total dissolved solids (TDS) a quantitative measure of the residual minerals dissolved in water that remain after evaporation of a solution. Usually expressed in milligrams per liter. See also salinity

**toxic** Poisonous, relating to or caused by a poison. Toxicity is determined for individual contaminants or for mixtures of contaminants as found in waste discharges.

**transmissivity** The product of hydraulic conductivity and aquifer thickness; a measure of a volume of water to move through an aquifer. Transmissivity generally has the units of ft²/day or gallons per day/foot. Transmissivity is a measure of the subsurface's ability to transmit groundwater horizontally through its entire saturated thickness and affects the potential yield of wells.

**transpiration** An essential physiological process in which plant tissues give off water vapor to the atmosphere.

# U

**unconfined aquifer** An aquifer which is not bounded on top by an aquitard. The upper surface of an unconfined aquifer is the water table.

**underground stream** Body of water flowing as a definite current in a distinct channel below the surface of the ground, usually in an area characterized by joints or fissures. Application of the term to ordinary aquifers is incorrect.

unsaturated zone The zone below the land surface in which pore space contains both water and air.

**urban water management plan** (UWMP) An UWMP is required for all urban water suppliers having more than 3,000 connections or supplying more than 3,000 acre-feet of water. The plans include discussions on water supply, supply reliability, water use, water conservation, and water shortage contingency and serve to assist urban water suppliers with their long-term water resources planning to ensure adequate water supplies for existing and future demands.

**usable storage capacity** The quantity of groundwater of acceptable quality that can be economically withdrawn from storage.

## V

vadose zone See unsaturated zone

**volatile organic compound (VOC)** A manmade organic compound that readily vaporizes in the atmosphere. These compounds are often highly mobile in the groundwater system and are generally associated with industrial activities.

#### W

water quality Description of the chemical, physical, and biological characteristics of water, usually in regard to its suitability for a particular purpose or use.

water table See groundwater table

water year A continuous 12-month period for which hydrologic records are compiled and summarized. Different agencies may use different calendar periods for their water years.

watershed The land area from which water drains into a stream, river, or reservoir.

well completion report A required, confidential report detailing the construction, alteration, abandonment, or destruction of any water well, cathodic protection well, groundwater monitoring well, or geothermal heat exchange well. The reports were called *Water Well Drillers' Report* prior to 1991 and are often referred to as "driller's logs." The report requirements are described in the California Water Code commencing with Section 13750.

**WQCP** Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento San Joaquin Delta Estuary.

# **Metric Conversions**

Quantity	To Convert from Metric Unit	To Customary Unit	Multiply Metric Unit By	To Convert to Metric Unit Multiply Customary Unit By
Length	millimeters (mm)	inches (in)	0.03937	25.4
	centimeters (cm) for snow depth	inches (in)	0.3937	2.54
	meters (m)	feet (ft)	3.2808	0.3048
	kilometers (km)	miles (mi)	0.62139	1.6093
Area	square millimeters (mm2)	square inches (in2)	0.00155	645.16
	square meters (m2)	square feet (ft2)	10.764	0.092903
	hectares (ha)	acres (ac)	2.4710	0.40469
	square kilometers (km2)	square miles (mi2)	0.3861	2.590
Volume	liters (L)	gallons (gal)	0.26417	3.7854
	megaliters	million gallons (10*)	0.26417	3.7854
	cubic meters (m3)	cubic feet (ft3)	36.315	0.028317
	cubic meters (m3)	cubic yards (yd3)	1.308	0.76455
	cubic dekameters (dam3)	acre-feet (ac-ft)	0.8107	1.2335
Flow	cubic meters per second (m3/s)	cubic feet per second (ft3/s)	35.315	0.028317
	liters per minute (L/mn)	gallons per minute (gal/mn)	0.26417	3.7854
	liters per day (L/day)	gallons per day (gal/day)	0.26417	3.7854
	megaliters per day (ML/day)	million gallons per day (mgd)	0.26417	3.7854
	cubic dekameters per day (dam3/day)	acre-feet per day (ac-ft/day)	0.8107	1.2335
Mass	kilograms (kg)	pounds (lbs)	2.2046	0.45359
	megagrams (Mg)	tons (short, 2,000 lb.)	1.1023	0.90718
Velocity	meters per second (m/s)	feet per second (ft/s)	3.2808	0.3048
Power	kilowatts (k/W)	horsepower (hp)	1.3405	0.746
Pressure	kilopascals (kPa)	pounds per square inch (psi) eet head of water	0.14505	6.8948
	kilopascals (kPa)		0.32456	2.989
Specific Capacity	liters per minute per meter drawdown	gallons per minute per foot drawdown	0.08052	12.419
Concentration	milligrams per liter (mg/L)	parts per million (ppm)	1.0	1.0
Electrical Conductivity	microsiemens per centimeter (μS/cm)	micromnos per centermeter	1.0	1.0
Temperature	degrees Celsius (°C)	degrees Fahrenheit (°F)	(1.8X°C)+32	(°F-321/18

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